The oil marketing companies, *viz.*, IOCL, HPCL and BPCL are estimated to be suffering a total under-recovery of over Rs. 73,500 crore during the current year. ONGC/MRPL are not 'oil marketing companies', but are in upstream and refining sector respectively. They also do not market PDS kerosene and LPG.

Revenue from Domestic LPG

1590. SHRI VEDPRAKASH P. GOYAL: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government are again planning to increase the prices of domestic LPG;

(b) if so, what are the reasons, which force Government to increase the LPG price in very three/four months; and

(c) how much revenue Government generate every year from domestic LPG?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA J. PATEL): (a) There is no such proposal currently under consideration of the Government.

(b) Does not arise in view of (a) above.

(c) Excise Duty and Customs Duty on domestic LPG has been reduced to 'Nill' *w.e.f.* 1.3.2005. As such there is no revenue generation to Central Government from this product.

Oil and Gas reserves in Bay of Bengal

1591. SHRI SURENDRA LATH: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the huge resources of oil and natural gas in the Bay of Bengal and in Mahanadi Basin in Orissa; and

(b) if so, what steps Government are taking for proper exploration of oil and natural gas from the Bay of Bengal and Mahanadi Basin in Orissa?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA J. PATEL): (a) and (b) The Bay of Bengal and Mahanadi area comprises five sedimentary basins having a basinal area of 41,000 sq. kms. The total prognosticated reserves in these basins are approximately 1135 MMT (O+OEG). Government of India has awarded a total of 41 Exploration Blocks, so far, for oil/gas exploration activities. 27 oil and gas discoveries have been made by private/Joint Venture (JV) companies. 657.74 MMT of in place oil and gas reserves have been established. Oil production from the east coast is about 7,470 tonnes/day whereas gas production is 2.3 MMSCMD.

Apart from these 41 blocks, Government of India has offered 23 blocks under the ongoing VI bidding round of the New Exploration Licensing Policy (NELP), for which bid-closing date is 15.9.2006.

New Marketing Strategy for LPG Cylinders

1592. SHRI DARA SINGH: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are planning for a new marketing strategy for distribution of Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) cylinders;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government are aware that domestic LPG cylinders are being diverted for commercial purposes and to check such diversion by oil companies has proved futile; and

(d) if so,the extent to which the new marketing strategy for distribution of LPG cylinders would check such diversion of LPG cylinders for commercial purposes?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA J. PATEL): (a) to (d) The cases of diversion of domestic LPG cylinders for commercial purposes have come to the notice of Public Sector Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs). With a view to curb diversion of domestic LPG cylinders for commercial purposes, Government has advised OMCs to provide different colour scheme for domestic and commercial cylinders for easy identification.